

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An implant hole guide for use in drilling a hole in an edentulous area of a jaw bone in preparation for receiving a dental implant in the jaw bone, comprising:

an elongated metal bone engagement bar having first and second opposite ends, a first surface adapted to engage a jaw bone ridge area adjacent a site on a patient's jaw bone ridge for receiving the hole, and an opposite second surface;

a cylindrical drill guide bore extending through the bar from the first to the second surface and adjacent the first end for guiding a drill for drilling a hole into the jaw bone;

a first guide post extending outwardly from the first surface of the bar adjacent the second end of the bar; and

a second guide post extending outwardly from the second surface of the bar adjacent the second end of the bar and coaxial with the first post;

the first and second posts being parallel to the axis of the bore and spaced from the bore by a minimum center-to-center implant distance which is sufficient to maintain at least 3 mm of jaw bone between adjacent implant receiving holes in the jaw bone;

each of the posts having a diameter that is no larger than the diameter of a selected hole to be drilled into the jaw bone so that with the first post in a first selected hole in the jaw bone and the first surface engaging the jaw bone, the guide bore can be used to guide a drill for drilling a second selected hole in the jaw bone that is spaced from the first selected hole by at least 3 mm.

2. A guide according to claim 1, wherein the opposite ends of the bone engagement bar are cylindrical and the bar includes a flat bridge portion between the opposite ends.

3. A guide according to claim 1, including an aperture in the bridge portion for receiving a safety string.

4. A guide according to claim 3, wherein the aperture is cylindrical.

5. A guide according to claim 4, wherein the aperture is closer to the posts than to the guide bore.

6. A guide according to claim 3, wherein the bridge portion is thinner in a direction parallel to the first and second surfaces and between the first and second ends, than the bar at the first end containing the guide bore.

7. A guide according to claim 6, wherein the aperture is cylindrical.

8. A guide according to claim 6, wherein the aperture is polygonal.

9. A guide according to claim 1, wherein the first post has a diameter that is slightly less than the diameter of a selected pilot hole in the jaw bone.

10. A guide according to claim 1, wherein the first post has a diameter of about 2 mm.

11. A guide according to claim 9, wherein the second post has a diameter that is slightly less than the diameter of a selected final hole in the jaw bone.

12. A guide according to claim 11, wherein the second post has a diameter of about 3 mm.

13. A guide according to claim 1, wherein the spacing between the axis of the posts and the axis of the bore is at least 7 mm.

14. A guide according to claim 1, wherein the spacing between the axis of the posts and the axis of the bore is about 7 to 10 mm.

15. A guide according to claim 1, wherein each post is no longer than the depth of a selected hole drilled into the jaw bone.

16. A guide according to claim 1, wherein each post is about 7 to 9 mm long.

17. A guide according to claim 1, including a stabilizing extension extending from the second end of the bar and including two pair of spaced apart jaw bone engaging points, the points being spaced from the posts to provide leverage against rotation of the guide when one of the posts is in a jaw bone hole and one pair of points is engaged with the jaw bone.

18. A guide according to claim 17, wherein edges of the extension extending outwardly from the bar, are concave inwardly between the bar and each of the points.

19. A guide according to claim 18, wherein edges of the extension between the points on one surface of the extension that extends from the first or the second surface of the bar, are concave inwardly and an outer surface of the extension that is farthest from the bar, is concave inwardly toward the bar.

20. A guide according to claim 19, wherein edges of the extension between points on opposite surfaces of the extension that extend from the first and the second surfaces of the bar, are straight.